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Women's Schools in China

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NEW YORK, N. Y.

Women's Schools in China

SINCE the beginning of our missionary work in China more than 75 years ago, the girls have come in increasing numbers to our schools but the poor ignorant women have had little opportunity. Owing to their bound feet and the impropriety of being seen on the street they rarely leave their homes and have intercourse with the outside world. They cannot read so have no opportunity for self-improvement. The very name by which they are known to their husbands, "Inside the house" (for Chinese husbands never speak of their wives) implies what is expected of them. Shut in her dingy, unsanitary home with all the attending dirt, squalor, heathenism and superstition, with no ideals and no hope for the future, you can imagine how narrow the life of a Chinese woman is.

Think, then, what it means when the missionary enters such a home and, after winning the confidence and respect of its inmates, finds it can be arranged to have one of the women attend the Women's School for a period of study. Owing to the custom of sons' bringing their wives or prospective wives into the ancestral home, there are usually several women in a home, and so it is possible to plan for the care of the children.

These Women's Schools are not strictly graded as are the Girls' Schools but the courses of study are so arranged that the women can get the most out of a short stay. Fortunately in our Amoy Mission we have the Romanized writing which can be learned even by an ignorant woman in a month or six weeks of faithful study. So beginning with a Primer, she soon goes on to a simple story of the Gospel followed by a catechism and Bible study.

Some of the women remain in the school only a few weeks, others a few months and some a year or longer and many of them during this time come to understand what Christ can do for them and are led to accept Him as their personal Saviour.

Follow, then, some of these women who, with a new hope in their own lives and a joy and peace they have never believed possible, return to their homes anxious to bring the message to members of their families and to others. Some of the women who have studied at these Women's Schools become Bible women and under the direction of our missionaries visit regularly the homes of heathen women and teach and explain to them the Gospel message. Others have become matrons in the Girls' Boarding Schools and exert a Christian influence there. So the seed is being sown and there is no limit to the influence of one such Women's School in a district.

You, who contribute to the support of these schools, have the joy of knowing that every time you help to bring the Gospel message to one woman in China you are improving the prospects for another Christian home, and Christian homes mean Christian families which are the hope of the new China of to-day.